



U.S. Department of Justice

Immigration and Naturalization Service

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

425 Eye Street N.W.

ULLB, 3rd Floor

Washington, D.C. 20536

File: EAC-99-197-51927

Office: Vermont Service Center

Date: NOV 27 2000

IN RE: Petitioner:

Beneficiary:

Petition: Petition for Special Immigrant Religious Worker Pursuant to Section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(4)

IN BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office which originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information which you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of the Service where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. Id.

Any motion must be filed with the office which originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.7.

FOR THE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER,
EXAMINATIONS

Mary C. Mulrean, Acting Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The immigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, Vermont Service Center. The matter is now before the Associate Commissioner for Examinations on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is an organization which seeks classification of the beneficiary as a special immigrant religious worker pursuant to section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. 1153(b)(4), to serve as a priest. The director denied the petition determining that the petitioner had failed to establish that the prospective occupation is a religious occupation.

On appeal, counsel argues that the beneficiary is eligible for the benefit sought.

Section 203(b)(4) of the Act provides classification to qualified special immigrant religious workers as described in section 101(a)(27)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(C), which pertains to an immigrant who:

- (i) for at least 2 years immediately preceding the time of application for admission, has been a member of a religious denomination having a bona fide nonprofit, religious organization in the United States;

- (ii) seeks to enter the United States--

- (I) solely for the purpose of carrying on the vocation of a minister of that religious denomination,

- (II) before October 1, 2000, in order to work for the organization at the request of the organization in a professional capacity in a religious vocation or occupation, or

- (III) before October 1, 2000, in order to work for the organization (or for a bona fide organization which is affiliated with the religious denomination and is exempt from taxation as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Code of 1986) at the request of the organization in a religious vocation or occupation; and

- (iii) has been carrying on such vocation, professional work, or other work continuously for at least the 2-year period described in clause (i).

A petitioner is required to submit required initial evidence at the time of filing. 8 C.F.R. 103.2(b)(1). This includes proof that the prospective employer is a qualifying organization as defined in

these proceedings. 8 C.F.R. 204.5(m)(3)(i). A qualifying organization is defined as an organization exempt from, or eligible for exemption from, taxation as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as it relates to religious organizations. Id. The petitioner furnished a letter from the Internal Revenue Service dated July 23, 1993, stating that the Hindu American Temple and Cultural Center, Inc. was granted recognition as a tax exempt organization. The letter indicates, however, that the basis for this status is that the petitioner is an organization described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code. This section refers to charities that receive a substantial part of their support in the form of contributions from publicly supported organizations, from a governmental unit, or from the general public. This section is not the one relating to religious organizations. Cf. section 170(b)(1)(A)(i) IRC. Therefore, the petitioner is not tax-exempt as a religious organization and is not a qualifying organization as defined in these proceedings. For this reason, the petitioner is ineligible to receive special immigrant classification for any prospective alien employees.

As the petitioner is ineligible to receive special immigrant classification for the beneficiary, the issue discussed by the director need not be examined.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. 1361. The petitioner has not sustained that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.